

objected to the burning-over of valuable timber land in the Serra de Monchique. Tracts of land were then set aside to provide the white oak used in the shipyards. The cork oak and holm oak were also used, together with pine, some of which was brought down from the Mondego. Ships built in Lagos were highly prized and sold in Andalusia for three times the local price. Such sales were eventually forbidden owing to the dwindling supply of local timber, a prohibition sometimes circumvented by renting arrangements. Lagos was also the location of a tannery and of a soap factory owned by a court official, Mem de Freitas.

The Rossio, the communal grazing land, which seems to have been in the general area of the present football ground, provided pasturage for sheep, cattle, and goats. Some grain was obtained from Aldeia do Bispo, Raposeira, and Bensafrim, and some was brought by mule train from the Alentejo. It was ground in local mills. Near to Alvor there was a saltwater mill which captured seawater at high tide and then a system of sluices provided power for the wheel.

The sea was Lagos' highway, but primitive roads linked the town with Alvor, Aldeia do Bispo, Bord-eiras, and Aljezur. Another road went through the Serra de Monchique into the Alentejo, with one branch going to Évora and another to Almada on the south bank of the Tagus. This "road to Portugal" could not carry wheeled traffic; it could be used only on horseback or with mules. Passage through the Serra was considered particularly dangerous because of lurking brigands.

As the sixteenth century drew to a close there came the lengthening shadows of the night that was to fall. Alexandre Herculano, quoted earlier, went on to say that the glory of the golden years was purchased "at the price of future disgrace, with the death of all hope, the bearing for centuries of a cup full of ills and affronts." Lagos was to share in the long night. It had always been involved in the constant struggle to maintain and garrison the African forts, a continual drain on its resources. It was

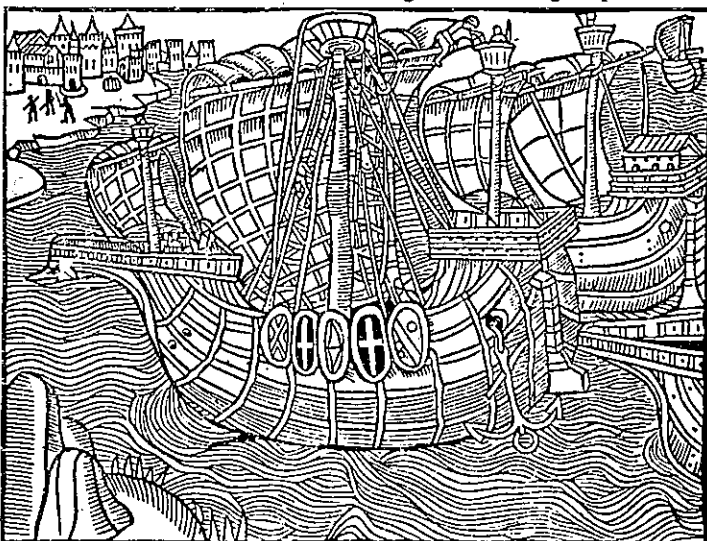
from Lagos that in 1578 the young king, Sebastian, sailed on the ill-fated expedition which ended in his death and the annihilation of his armies at Alcácer-Quivir. Many Lagos men and ships went with him; few returned. In 1580 the crown passed to the Spanish kings and sixty years of foreign domination followed. The Dutch ravaged the Portuguese trading routes and strangled Portuguese commerce. Lagos' proud fleet dwindled and disappeared. Portugal became a



*This statue of Dom Sebastião by local artist João Cutileiro stands in Lagos's main square.*

pawn in the power struggle between England and France. The people of the Algarve could do little more than maintain a bare subsistence. Lagos languished and slept.

The ensuing centuries were the years of *saudade*, the yearning after past glories, and Sebastianism, the hidden hope that a saviour-king would appear and lead the country back to its place in the sun. It may be that in this, the twentieth century, Sebastian has come back to Lagos. Not in the form and shape of José Cutileiro's statue in front of the Câmara building, but in the guise of a northern visitor in search of sun. Tourism has awakened Lagos from its long sleep.



*Lagos shipyards built the caravels in which Gil Eannes set out in 1434 to double Cape Bojador.*

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